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THE

BLACK RECORD

NASSER'S PERSECUTION
of EGYPTIAN JEWRY

Pam Israel Goldstein
Jews

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of EGYPTIAN JEWRY

AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS

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INTRODUCTION

On October 29, 1956, units of the Israeli army entered the Sinai Peninsula. On November 1, within 72 hours of this thrust, the Egyptian government promulgated a series of detailed, highly complex decrees which, among other things, established a state of siege, imposed a thorough-going censorship, facilitated the denationalization of certain Egyptian citizens, and provided a juridical basis for the subsequent sequestration and confiscation of property of various private persons.

On the very next day, November 2, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution calling for a cease-fire and the withdrawal of Israeli, British and French forces from Egypt. On the following day, the United Nations adopted a resolution calling for the creation of a UN emergency force to enforce the truce. On November 4, the Egyptian government published further military decrees implementing its earlier regulations for the seizure of private property. On November 6, the United Nations cease-fire was accepted by the belligerent parties and arrangements were made for supervision of the cease-fire by an international UN police force.

It was expected that the repressive measures enacted during the hostilities would be withdrawn or annulled after the cease-fire. But this expectation proved futile. Beginning with reports received from Cairo on Novem-

ber 15, and almost daily thereafter, it became evident that Egypt was bent on exploiting the brief hostilities to despoil and ultimately destroy its Jewish community. Indeed, after the termination of hostilities, the persecutions of Egyptian Jewry, far from diminishing, took on such intensity that their ultimate import could not be mistaken. The initial reports from Cairo came to the world's notice in confused and fragmentary form. This was due to the special care taken by the Nasser regime to obscure the truth and veil its arbitrary actions in secrecy. Patterned on Nazi techniques, the Egyptian campaign against the Jews has been conducted with ruthless efficiency and disregard of the minimal moral standards that civilized nations embrace.

There are, however, important differences between Hitler's and Nasser's approach. The latter has learned to avoid the errors committed by Hitler. Where Hitler's anti-Semitism was blatantly avowed, Nasser's anti-Semitism is concealed. Where Hitler openly attacked Jews as Jews, Nasser has resorted to the disingenuous pretense that his animus is limited to "Zionists." In short, the Egyptian government has learned from Hitler's example that it cannot afford to ignore world opinion and that it is more expedient to conduct its anti-Jewish campaign in a manner that would avoid international notoriety. In the words of Dean James A. Pike of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York, "Nasser is much more clever than the Nazis."

The precautions of secrecy taken by the Nasser regime and its deliberate obfuscations made it difficult in the initial stages of the anti-Jewish campaign to piece together an exact picture of what was taking place in Egypt. The early reports could only hint at the

systematic and well-organized plan, long in preparation, that had been put into practice to pauperize, denationalize and expel the Jewish community. Since then, thousands of Egyptian Jews have arrived in Europe and Israel and have corroborated by their own experiences the harrowing reports of journalists, travelers and diplomats about the desperate plight of the Jewish community of Egypt. Official Egyptian documents also have come to light which testify to the drastic measures adopted by Egypt to destroy the Jewish community.

The physical survival of one of the oldest and most peaceful religious communities of the world is at stake. Its rescue depends upon firm intervention with the Nasser regime by our own country as well as by the other free nations.

I. EGYPTIAN XENOPHOBIA

The Semantic Ruse

SPOKESMEN FOR THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT have repeatedly denied that it is engaged in a campaign of anti-Jewish repression; they contend that whatever action has been taken against Jews has been directed solely against "Zionist agents." But the fact is that the Zionist movement has had little influence among Egyptian Jews. This is not surprising if only because Egypt's 50,000 Jews, a tiny minority in Egypt's total population of 22,000,000, would not have been so foolhardy, even if they so desired, to espouse pro-Zionist or pro-Israel attitudes since 1948, let alone engage in any acts even remotely inimical to the security of the Egyptian government.

But as Fred Sparks, a Scripps-Howard correspondent, has observed, the Egyptian authorities emphasize the anti-Zionist rather than the anti-Jewish aspects of their discrimination strictly for public relations purposes:

At this time there is "no anti-Jewish terror" in the manner of a Hitler-style pogrom. The pressure—subtle and unofficial—is a "shadowy persecution." . . . The government has condemned anti-Jewish threats and violence; such publicity cannot serve Colonel Nasser in his battle for world opinion. (New York *World Telegram*, December 27, 1956.)

But in 1947, Egyptian leaders were less discreet. Dr. Mohammed Hussein Heykal Pasha, then chief of the Egyptian delegation to the United Nations, publicly warned that:

The lives of one million Jews in Moslem countries would be jeopardized by partition . . . if Arab blood is shed in Palestine, Jewish blood will necessarily be shed elsewhere in the world despite all the sincere efforts of the government concerned to prevent such reprisals. (New York *Times*, November 25, 1947.)

These threats are now realities. Despite avowals by Egypt's officials that there is hostility only to Zionists and not to other Jews, open anti-Semitic comments have appeared in the Egyptian press and have been made by Colonel Nasser himself. On August 14, 1955, he publicly stated:

"I am not fighting solely against world Zionism and Jewish capital. . . . (*Al Ahram*, Cairo, August 15, 1955.)

Following the same line, the Cairo newspaper, *El Tahrir*, on November 27, 1956—that is, after the war-time censorship had already been instituted and no newspaper article could appear without the sanction of the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior—published an article describing the history, traditions and religious practices of the Jews, in terms as odious as any that can be found in the Nazi and Fascist publications of the 30's and 40's.

If there was any lingering doubt that the semantic maneuver of adopting the term "Zionist" for "Jew" was designed solely to divert world opinion from the essential character of Egypt's anti-Jewish campaign, it is finally dispelled by the scope of that campaign. The number of Jews affected by the acts of internment, expulsion and sequestration is so large as to preclude any belief that the target of Egypt's wrath is solely the "Zionists" who allegedly menace Egypt's security.

The Doctrine of "Egyptianization"

In the earlier phases of the Egyptian anti-Jewish outbreaks, there was a tendency to believe that they represented merely a temporary and passing expression of ultra-nationalist fervor intensified by Israel's entry into Sinai. But the scope of the continuing anti-Jewish campaign, and the speed with which it has reached into every corner of Egyptian Jewish life, indicate that it is the culmination of a carefully prepared and planned design for the dispersion and destruction of the Jewish community.

One of the proudly proclaimed doctrines of the Nasser Revolution is that of "Egyptianization." This professedly is intended only to encourage domestic ownership of domestic industry, but actually it is a euphemism for a program that includes the expropriation of private property, the exclusion from economic life, and the expulsion from Egypt not only of so-called "enemy aliens" and "foreigners" but also of non-Moslem native Egyptians, no matter how long they and their families have resided within the land. It should be borne in mind that a large majority of the 50,000 Jews living in Egypt were born there and derive from families who have lived there for generations, but that less than 20% have been permitted to obtain Egyptian citizenship. About 15,000 were deemed stateless and the rest were technically the nationals of foreign countries, principally Great Britain, France, Italy and Greece, even though most of them had never been outside of Egypt's borders.

The Egyptian authorities, by restrictive interpretation of the Nationality Act of September 13, 1950, as well as earlier statutes, for years have in effect barred all Jews from citizenship in the interest of preserving "national homogeneity." Since 1936, an occasional Jew has been permitted naturalization, but throughout this period such cases were exceptional. It is ironic that many technically stateless Jews, as well as those nominally nationals of other countries, belong to families whose residence in Egypt antedates that of some members of the military junta now in control of the government.

Nevertheless, these are the persons now being made the principal victims of "Egyptianization." The way this program operates to exclude them from virtually all segments of Egyptian economic life is demonstrated by the effect of a decree announced in Cairo on January 15, 1957. To quote the *New York Times* of January 16:

Nasser has decreed the "Egyptianization" of all British and French banks and insurance companies in Egypt. . . . All other foreign banks and insurance companies were given five years before they too would be "Egyptian-

ized". . . . Private shareholders will continue to retain their stocks in companies, but all shareholders must have been born in Egypt and must be Egyptian citizens. Directors must be native-born citizens also. . . . Another decree to become effective tomorrow makes it imperative that all agents representing foreign manufacturers in Egypt must be native-born Egyptian citizens. However, the Government can in certain cases extend permission to foreigners to continue as agents of those companies for five years more.

Since a large proportion of the Jewish community has been barred from Egyptian citizenship, this decree disqualifies practically all Jews from participating in any Egyptian financial corporation. The "Egyptianization" program under Nasser is reminiscent of the Nazi slogan "Germany for the Germans" and of the Nazi technique for pauperizing the Jews and forcing them out of the country.

That the destruction of the Jewish community is a deliberate and long-planned policy of the Nasser administration is made evident by the dispatch with which it promulgated its new nationality laws and the regulations governing the sequestration of private property. These decrees are intricate and comprehensive. They are obviously the product of considerable study and preparation. They could not have been conceived, written and printed in the three or four days that intervened between the opening of military hostilities between Israel and Egypt and their publication in official journals. The very perfection of the techniques now employed by the Egyptian government clearly indicates that these acts reflect not an improvised response in a moment of crisis but a thorough and well-wrought plan for the spoliation and destruction of the ancient Jewish community of Egypt.

In carrying out this design the Nasser government has resorted to four principal measures: (1) seizure of hostages; (2) denationalization of Jews; (3) internments and expulsions; and (4) sequestration of property.

II. TECHNIQUES OF DESTRUCTION

The Seizure of Hostages

THE MOST REPREHENSIBLE of all the acts of persecution ordered by Nasser—the seizure of hostages—is motivated by two considerations: to terrorize the Jewish community and to intimidate Jews expelled from the country from speaking the truth about what is taking place in Egypt. In seizing hostages, it has reverted to a method of suppression that all civilized states have abjured. In seeking to ensure the silence of the Jews who have departed from Egypt, the Nasser regime has emulated typical totalitarian practices.

An Associated Press dispatch from Port Said on November 26, 1956, reported that “Jews began leaving Port Said today, leaving behind hostages seized from each family by the Egyptians the night before the British and French landings.” The seizure of hostages was confirmed the next day by Mr. Harry Coe, the British consul in Port Said. Mr. Coe declared that he had received reports that of the 300 Jewish residents of Port Said one member of each family was taken away by the Egyptian police and none has been heard from since. He added that the secret police reportedly seized a number of Jewish leaders in raids in other Egyptian cities. (New York *World Telegram*, November 29, 1956.)

This practice of seizing hostages extended beyond the immediate emergency of the British and French landings. On December 15, the *Washington Star* reported:

The last shipload of Jews fled Port Said yesterday, leaving behind two frightened families. These two refused to depart until their men are released from hostage.

“They say it’s no use going anywhere without their men,” explained Rabbi Marcel Kalifa, Jewish chaplain for the

French forces who supervised yesterday's departure. "They feel life isn't worth while with just half their families and they would just as well suffer here as somewhere else."

He added: "Please, no names, they're in trouble enough already."

Jewish families had been visited by Egyptian secret police in the early morning hours just before British and French troops landed here last month and one member of each family was taken hostage. There has been no word of them since, Jews here say. Rabbi Kalifa said his check of families here showed 92 had been taken from Port Said's total Jewish population of 300 in that raid.

On December 12, a New York *Post* correspondent reported that he had personally "talked to a dozen persons whose friends and relations had disappeared," and that in a synagogue he visited "every Jew I talked to had a close friend or relative who had just 'disappeared.'"

The Denationalization Process

A product of the combined thinking of Egypt's Jewish Department and the authors of the "Egyptianization" program was "Law No. 329," issued on November 20, 1956 by President Nasser. This law, in effect, denationalized all "Zionists" and laid the groundwork for branding as undesirable all stateless Jews in Egypt because of their alleged failure to integrate themselves into Egyptian life and because of their presumably unstable loyalty to the state. The text of the law was published in Egypt's *Journal du Commerce et de la Marine* and reproduced in the Egyptian newspaper, *Le Progrès Egyptien*.

The most drastic feature of this law is contained in Article 1, which stipulates that "neither Zionists, nor those against whom a judgment has been handed down for crimes of disloyalty to the country or for treason" are to be considered Egyptian nationals, and that "no request for the delivery of a certificate of Egyptian nationality will be accepted from persons known as Zionists." The law provides that the citizenship of all Jews who acquired Egyptian nationality after January 1, 1900, is to be re-examined for possible denationalization proceedings and

only those who can persuade the Minister of Interior that they are not lacking in loyalty and that they are not Zionists are secure against cancellation of nationality.

It has already been noted that the Egyptian authorities tend to use the terms "Zionist" and "Jew" interchangeably. When this is taken into account, along with what is known of the avowed anti-Jewish views of Zakariah Mohieddine, who functions in Egypt as Chief Censor as well as Minister of the Interior, it is evident that the Jews who apply to him for preserving their nationality will receive scant sympathy. Whatever their personal beliefs and sympathies, Egyptian Jewish nationals who acquired citizenship after 1900 have only the remotest chance of maintaining their nationality.

The chief effect of the new Nationality Law will be to augment the ranks of stateless Egyptian Jews, and this is an ominous time in Egypt to be rendered stateless. The promulgation of this law heralds the summary deportation of 15,000 stateless Jews.

One of the more cynical aspects of Egypt's anti-Jewish campaign is its use of legal forms to disguise its lawless behavior. The Egyptian government has effected the mass eviction of Jews on the pretext of their anomalous legal status. It has expelled or forced the departure of thousands of persons whose sole fault is that they could not persuade the Egyptian government that Jewish affiliation should be no bar to citizenship. The average stateless Jew in Egypt is neither a recent arrival nor a person indifferent to citizenship. Typically, he belongs to a family that has resided in the country for generations and has made energetic efforts to acquire nationality. In other modern states he would be considered eminently qualified for the responsibilities and opportunities of citizenship. In selecting stateless Jews as the chief victims of xenophobic nationalism, the Egyptian government was careful to single out the most vulnerable group in the country. The stateless persons can make no claim to the protection of any government and there exists no official agency empowered to intervene in their behalf.

The mass expulsion of the Jewish community began with the sudden and shocking notification to thousands of stateless persons that they were to be expelled, in most cases within a matter of seven to ten days. The alternative to evacuation was internment. There was no publication of an edict or decree or general order of expulsion. In most cases, police descended on the stateless Jews and ordered them to leave or face imprisonment. In a few cases, however, Egyptian police did issue to individuals written orders of expulsion in the expectation that these documents would be extracted from them at the time of departure. A few of these orders, however, were brought out of Egypt.

After originally concentrating its fire mainly on stateless Jews, the Egyptian government began to widen its target. It does not trouble now to make nice distinctions as to nationality. There are reports that on November 23, 1956, instructions were issued by Sheikh El Bakouri, the Egyptian Minister of Religious Affairs, and read on that day by order of the government in every mosque in every town and village in Egypt. El Bakouri announced that from that day on all Jews in Egypt were to be regarded and treated as enemies of the country. He urged the people of Egypt to refrain from contact, whether commercial or social, with Egyptian Jews, and assured them that the remaining Jews would soon be compelled to depart. He stated that the government was proceeding expeditiously to rid Egypt of the Jews; and on that ground alone asked Egyptians to refrain from private retaliations against them.

Mass Arrests

Under cover of legalistic pretexts for persecution, the life of the Egyptian Jewish community has already been converted into a nightmare of oppression. Emergency Law No. 533 of 1954 authorized the Military Governor of Egypt to "order the arrest and apprehension of suspects and those who prejudice public order and security." The provisions of this law furnished the legal basis for the

arrest and detention of thousands of persons, including many already under order of deportation but who were unable to obtain foreign passage. It is estimated that at least 1,000 persons were imprisoned under wretched physical conditions in the "Prison des Barrages" in Cairo, and in special detention centers in Cairo, Alexandria, Assouan and Heliopolis. Those jailed included practically every leader in Egyptian Jewish communal life. Almost every member of the Jewish Community Councils of both Cairo and Alexandria was arrested and imprisoned in the earliest stages of the terror. A few have since been released.

In seeking to screen its ruthless conduct from the world the Egyptian government has not been entirely successful. It is impossible, despite the most carefully contrived schemes, to conceal official crimes of such scope. In the first weeks of December a number of Egyptian Jewish escapees gave affidavits to the American Jewish Congress, attesting to the measures employed by the Egyptian government to oppress its Jewish population and to harass them into "voluntary" flight. These persons are unwilling to disclose their names for publication but they are ready to appear before any official agency of the United States or the United Nations to describe the conditions they have personally witnessed in Egypt. The reason for their insistence on anonymity is understandable and, of itself, a significant commentary on Egypt's reign of terror.

There are uniform themes running through all the statements that have been received. The mass arrests of Egyptian Jews are accompanied by no legal warrant and there is no provision for arraignment or indictment. There is no discernible pattern or rationale in the sequence of arrests or in the manner in which individuals are singled out for imprisonment. No one is apprised of the identity of others arrested or of the grounds for arrest. Part of the nightmarish atmosphere derives from the mixture of informality and ruthlessness with which the arrests are carried out. The police appear suddenly

at the residence of the person to be arrested, almost always late at night or in the early morning, obviously to avoid public attention. Occasionally the arresting officers are in civilian dress. There is no explanation for the arrest and very little conversation of any kind. Persons arrested are quietly ordered to pack a small case of personal articles and are then taken to the nearest police station. From that point they are assigned to detention centers. During the arrests there is no violence. The police have been careful to permit no show of brutality on the streets. But this restraint is dropped at the door of the detention centers.

As noted earlier, stateless Jews at first comprised the overwhelming majority of those arrested. But since then Jews of all nationalities have been interned. Possession of a passport of another country, even one at peace with Egypt, offers no protection to Egyptian Jews. At best, a foreign passport serves only to expedite final departure. The American Jewish Congress has in its files an affidavit from an American Jew interned in Egypt recently even though he had been traveling on a U. S. passport. This person, a native of Cairo, had entered the United States as a quota immigrant but had returned to Egypt to attend to personal business affairs. He was released from prison only after he had guaranteed he would leave Egypt.

While it is impossible to determine the exact number of arrests, it is certain that they have been carried out steadily since Israel's entry into Sinai. A dispatch appearing in the *New York Times* as early as November 24 reported that,

Two days after the Israeli attack of October 29, the Egyptian police rounded up between 25 and 30 Jews and took them to Cairo. In effect, they are hostages there. "What can I do? What can I do?" an elderly widow sobbed. Her older daughter, age 30, was among those taken to Cairo.

On the same day the *Times* correspondent in Cairo, Osgood Caruthers, noted that although ". . . the Egyptians have made it a matter of basic doctrine that their

strongest opposition was aimed at Zionism and at Israel, and not against the Jewish people," nevertheless the arrest orders "according to authoritative estimates affect thousands of Jews in Cairo who are of foreign nationality, many of them British and French subjects, or who are in the status of stateless persons. It was not known how many others might be affected throughout the rest of the country." He went on to observe:

. . . As it is, Britons, Frenchmen and Jews of foreign nationality, or in the stateless category, were being given individual orders as to when they were to pack up and leave the country. They were permitted to take with them twenty Egyptian pounds (\$56) for each adult and ten Egyptian pounds for each minor.

On November 27, a New York *Herald Tribune* correspondent reported from Port Said:

Some 150 Jews, many of them old residents of this city, fled Egypt today on board a French hospital ship.

Taking along not much more than they could carry, they sailed for Marseilles with thirty-seven other evacuees from this occupied area. The group, which included thirty children, departed rather than face an uncertain fate when Anglo-French forces leave and the Egyptian government takes over again.

Before the trouble began, the community totaled an estimated 300 families. . . . The number of Jews still here is believed to be less than fifty.

Most of the group were stateless, but a few carried Egyptian passports. They sailed with refugee permits that will allow them to stay in France for three months before deciding on a new domicile.

An International News Service correspondent reported that a Jewish escapee in Paris had told him:

"The policeman who arrested me was a fairly high official. He told me: 'We've got a list of 6,000 Jews we're going to imprison or expel. And that's only a first list of 6,000. Soon there'll be no more Jews in Egypt. You'll all have to go!'" The refugees arrive in Europe begging correspondents not to use their names for fear of reprisals against relatives. (New York *Journal-American*, December 21, 1956.)

Conditions in the improvised detention centers into which internees have been herded are appalling. The *New York Post* of January 8, 1957, gave this account:

Jewish refugees arriving from Egypt disclosed today they were led handcuffed through the streets of Cairo and Alexandria and were stoned and spat upon by Arab mobs while their guards laughed and taunted: "Now you are going to die."

The men among the Misr's passengers had all been held at the Sebil School in Cairo, which the Egyptians had converted into an internment camp. The women were interned first at the Betesh School in Heliopolis, a suburb of Cairo, and later transferred to the Citadel prison. One of the women was interned with a 2-day-old baby.

For the first three days of internment the men at Sebil were kept completely without food by the camp commandant, Major Hadidi, a blue-uniformed official of the national police.

The stocky, muscular major seems to have conformed to the classic pattern of prisoner of war and concentration camp commandants. He was violently anti-Semitic, often proclaiming that Egypt had no place for Jews—although Colonel Nasser himself has said many times that Egypt welcomes "loyal Jews," a statement at which these refugees laugh with some ironic bitterness.

For the first three days at Sebil, Major Hadidi locked 18 to 20 men in small rooms in which camp beds were packed so closely the occupants had to crawl over them to reach the door when they were finally allowed out. For the first three days they were kept without food.

In all there were more than 500 men interned at Sebil. They were allowed to go to the toilet only twice a day and then only during one hour in morning and one hour in evening.

After several weeks of internment, the Egyptian government allowed a representative of the International Red Cross to visit the camp. The internees told him their serious grievances. On learning of their report Hadidi was so incensed that he locked all the men in their rooms for three days and gave them no food whatsoever. This meant that for two three-day periods in the 60 days they were held, the 500 went without any sustenance at all.

And the food, when it was given, was comparable only to prisoner of war fare in the latter days of wartime Germany.

Although orders were given for the men to be allowed two hours of daily exercise in the open, they were never allowed out of the buildings. On arrival their watches and all personal jewelry were taken by Hadidi's guards—and never returned.

The women internees were equally bitter. The women were first taken to the school in Heliopolis, where their food was below subsistence level and sanitation facilities limited. They also were stripped of all jewelry and trinkets. . . .

An International News Service dispatch in the *New York Journal-American* of January 7 reported:

One man told of being taken to Cairo's Abassia Prison, where he was strung up by his wrists and beaten for three days. He said the torture was administered by Egypt's secret police in an effort to make him tell where his fortune was hidden.

He added that another prisoner subjected to the same brutality went mad. . . .

One woman refugee, whose husband still is in prison, related: "The terror began soon after the war began. Superintendents of all buildings began reporting the names of all Jews and other foreigners to police. Then came the police raids and orders confining us to our apartments. When the police would come after midnight, we knew it was bad. They would point at some member of our family and say, 'Come along. You're wanted.' Then they would take the member to the police station and imprison him without court procedure."

She said the prisoners would be jailed along with criminals. . . .

The arrival of the refugee ship *Misir* in Naples on January 7, 1957, afforded Western correspondents the first opportunity of interviewing a substantial group of Egyptian Jews free of Egyptian surveillance. The *New York Times* correspondent who reported their arrival was able to persuade some of the escapees to disclose their names:

Aboard the *Misir* were Dr. Jacob Coen and Dr. Raymond Bayer, both formerly on the staff of the Jewish Hospital in Cairo. They had been held in the Jewish school in Cairo with hundreds of other men. The women in their families had been sent to a camp at Heliopolis.

The physicians said there were fifteen camp inmates to a room in the Cairo school. After reveille at 6 A.M., armed guards marched the inmates, three by three, to a wash-room. Then there were checks by policemen at 10 A.M. and 2, 4 and 10 P.M.

Rabbi Shalom Morg said that most of his fellow passengers were "destitute."

Elie Matalon, 22 years old, former employe of a photographic agency in Cairo, said he had been deprived of Egyptian citizenship and interned after he had applied for a passport to go to Paris.

Victor Benattar, a stateless chemist, who had been working for a foreign pharmaceutical concern in Cairo, charged that Egyptian police had beaten him till he signed a declaration that he was leaving the country for good. . . .

Ibrahim Vetaya, born in Egypt to Turkish parents, said he had been expelled with his wife and children after local authorities had seized his textile concern and £E800,000 in his bank account. [This would be equal to \$2,240,000.] None of the refugees had been allowed to take more than £E5 (about \$14) out of Egypt. They had many bundles but few suitcases.

Most of the exiles asked that their names be withheld because they feared reprisals against relatives and friends.

Of the 967 who arrived, 394 were women and 104 were children. . . . (*Times*, January 7.)

There are widespread reports that upon learning of the arrest and imprisonment of Jewish leaders, the Chief Rabbi of Egypt, Haim Nahoum Effendi, acted to obtain their release. His appeal was summarily rejected, and he was instructed by government officials not to meddle in "political" affairs. Rabbi Nahoum, who has held office since 1922, had been repeatedly decorated by Egyptian governments for his public services. When his attempted intervention was so brusquely rebuffed, Rabbi Nahoum—old, sick and almost blind—sent his resignation to President Nasser. Immediately thereafter two members of the Security Police came to his home and took him to the Ministry of the Interior where he was ordered to rescind his resignation; this he refused to do. One of his subordinates, however, was prevailed upon to issue an

unauthorized "denial" of Rabbi Nahoum's resignation to an Associated Press correspondent. This "denial" is not given much credence among the Egyptian Jews who were his congregants and were familiar with the duress to which he was subjected. The New York *Post* reported on January 8:

No one believes the Egyptian version of the recent broadcast by Egypt's Chief Rabbi Nahoum. They all claim Egyptian strong-arm men visited this aging, blind martyr and said: "You must say you are a loyal Egyptian; otherwise you are a Zionist. Zionists are our mortal enemies and if you are a Zionist all Jews here will be named Zionists and imprisoned.

In the face of incontrovertible evidence of the mass arrests and abuse of Egyptian Jews, Egyptian officials have blandly denied all. However, like Egyptian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Fawzi, they have been compelled to admit that "a few Jews" were taken into custody "because they were dangerous to the security of the state." (New York *Times*, November 29, 1956.) Fawzi's "few Jews" became in the admissions of Lieut. Col. Zakariah Mohieddine, Minister of the Interior, "288 Jews" who were being detained "for reasons of security." (*Times*, December 4, 1956.) In addition, Col. Mohieddine, while denying blanket seizure of Jewish property, admitted that "the assets of rich Jews" had been placed under government control "to be sure that they do not try to smuggle their money out of the country." (New York *Post*, December 4, 1956.) Col. Abdel Kader Hatem, director of the Egyptian Information Office, stated that of the non-Egyptian Jews in Egypt "only 280 had been asked to leave for 'security reasons,' and 26 of these were now out of the country." (New York *Journal-American*, December 21, 1956.) But, at another point, Col. Hatem had the effrontery to claim that "Egypt has not deported one single Jew." (New York *Post*, December 26, 1956.) How much faith can be reposed in official Egyptian denials of anti-Jewish measures can be gauged by the fact that Premier Habib Bourguiba, a Moslem himself and one who is

certainly sympathetic to Arab aspirations, has found it necessary to protest to Egypt about the discrimination against Jews of Tunisian nationality. He reminded Egypt that his government had never "made any difference between Tunisians on the basis of their religion." (*New York Times*, December 26, 1956.)

Deportations

The most informed estimates indicate that between November 22, 1956, and January 23, 1957, 8,435 refugee Jews—almost one-fifth of the entire Jewish community—succeeded in making their way to various foreign ports. (A schedule of arrivals of refugee Jews from Egypt appears in the appendix.) Thousands more are anxiously seeking passage to avoid imprisonment, and the shortage of transportation facilities has made the competition for space intense. William Richardson, in a report from Cairo published in the *New York Post* of December 13, 1956, contrasts the plight of the Nazi and Egyptian expellees in this regard:

Thousands of British, French and Jewish nationals . . . have even less chance than the Hitlerian refugees in the 1930's of salvaging anything from their property. In those days it was possible to arrange for some transfer of property. Some British and French nationals were able to help in a few cases and there were many routes out of Germany. From the day sequestration and expulsion began here there has been only one route—via a daily Scandinavian Airlines plane. Other airlines are only now beginning services from Cairo airport.

In another dispatch published January 8, Mr. Richardson reports that those fortunate enough to get passage are permitted to take with them only one suitcase of clothing and twenty Egyptian pounds (\$56). They are forced to sign formal declarations promising never to return. They are required to sign away all ownership to property in Egypt and renounce all financial claim they might have. In return for the privilege of exit, they are forced to declare that all assets they leave behind are

to be "given" to the Egyptian government. There were a number of refugees who refused to leave Egypt but who were coerced into departure. Mr. Richardson continues:

More than half the refugees to whom I talked said they had not asked permission to leave Egypt, as Nasser's government claims they did.

On the contrary, many refused at first to sign a prepared typewritten statement saying they wished to leave. But they were forced at gunpoint to sign. At least a dozen were beaten when they refused to sign, one man so severely he was hospitalized for 10 days.

Sequestration and Confiscation

Most Jews left behind in Egypt and who are not in jail find themselves without means of support. Bank accounts have been frozen, private and commercial property sequestered, industrial and commercial firms requisitioned and Jewish employees dismissed. A once economically independent community has been reduced to poverty and want and faces a desperate future. Department stores, banks and textile firms known throughout Egypt and the Middle East have been sequestered or confiscated. Official lists of sequestrations contain the names of hundreds of business enterprises, including such well-known and long-established firms as the Cicurel, Chemla, Hanau and Chalons department stores; the banking houses of Zilka and Mosseri; the Pinto Cotton firm, and many others. Conservative estimates indicate the assets sequestered or frozen amount to at least \$400 million.

The principal legal device for the sequestration of Jewish property is contained in Egyptian Military Proclamation No. 4, published in the *Journal Officiel* No. 88 bis A of November 1, 1956. This proclamation, titled the "Administration of the Property of Persons Interned or Put Under Surveillance and Other Persons and Institutions," should be distinguished from Proclamation No. 5, promulgated on the same day, which provides for the

seizure and administration of assets in Egypt belonging to British, French or Australian subjects. The very publication of Proclamation No. 4 indicates that all other sequestration proclamations have some purpose apart from freezing the funds of enemy aliens.

Proclamation No. 4 is specifically addressed to the control of assets belonging to persons placed under surveillance who are not enemy nationals. It clearly contemplates the wholesale expropriation of property of stateless Jews, Egyptian Jews and foreign Jews whose investments and assets otherwise would have escaped sequestration.

In order to concentrate large commercial holdings exclusively in the hands of Egyptian Moslems, the provisions of Article 2 of Proclamation No. 4 have been widely invoked. This article authorizes the designee of the state, appointed to administer a sequestered property

to agree to a settlement or to waive the total or any part of debts owing the business . . . and with the authorization of the Minister of Finance and Economy to proceed to sell the goods and to wind up any industrial or commercial enterprise or, in particular, to bring about the dissolution of the company or to acquiesce in such a dissolution.

The administrator is thus endowed with full control over the assets of the sequestered business. Debts may be forgiven at his whim, businesses may be sold and important interests may be transferred. This proclamation, moreover, goes far beyond the mere sequestration of property. It prohibits all direct or indirect transactions with any person or establishment whose property has been sequestered and bars the execution of any contract or agreement concluded by or for the benefit of such a person or establishment before the military decree was published. Finally, it has the effect of barring any person whose property has been sequestered from initiating any action in any court of Egypt or from continuing any such action already begun. Thus any firm owned or controlled by Jews is exposed to complete economic destruction. Jewish property and businesses may be seized at the whim of the administrator and transactions entered into may be retro-

actively nullified by the issuance of a sequestration order against which no defense is possible and from which no right of appeal exists.

The effect of giving a political functionary such absolute command over the assets of a business is to increase the opportunity for profitable side-deals and private frauds of his own. Under the law no one could question the decision of an administrator who depletes the assets of a Jewish firm in his custody through a series of disadvantageous deals with enterprises owned by Moslems. There is in addition a public purpose. The Egyptian Minister of the Interior has publicly invited Moslems to bid on shares of stock in firms sequestered from their Jewish owners. The Nasser government is thus able to advance its "Egyptianization" program. Under the guise of legality, it has taken properties belonging to Jews who spent their lives in developing them and placed them in the hands of Egyptian Moslems.

Proclamation No. 4 provided only the general legal authority for sequestration; within a week after its publication, implementing regulations were issued. Decree No. 170, published on November 8, 1956, listed 440 persons whose properties were to be sequestered and who were made liable to arrest and expulsion. Decree No. 171, published on November 11, mentions 25 additional persons, including the president of the Jewish community in Cairo. Decrees Nos. 174 to 196, published in the period from November 11 to 13, 1956, name 13 of the principal mercantile or commercial enterprises owned by Jews to be sequestered.

It is no accident that of the hundreds of persons who have been specifically included in decrees issued pursuant to Proclamation No. 4 almost all were Jews who were either Egyptian nationals, stateless persons or nationals of countries other than Britain or France. Without the extraordinary authority of Proclamation No. 4, their property could not have been touched under any regulation providing for the blocking or sequestration of the assets of enemy aliens.

In addition to the seizure of businesses under regular sequestration orders, all Jewish businesses that could be construed as having the remotest connection with defense have been expropriated under a regulation permitting the requisition by the army of all firms engaged in producing military items.

These decrees have been drastically enforced. In some cases Jewish firms simply were closed and their doors sealed. In others, a representative of the Ministry of Interior, accompanied by security officers, appeared at the firm's main offices and informed the owners that the Ministry had designated an administrator of the business and that all control was to be vested in his hands. Nominally, profits accruing from these operations are to be credited to the real owner and placed in his accounts, but these accounts are frozen and from present indications Egypt has no intention of returning the funds to their legal owners. Although a few Jewish-owned enterprises have been returned, notably the Cairo department store owned by the Cicurel family, the vast bulk of Jewish property is still in government hands.

The Jewish community has also been stripped of communal property. Hospitals constructed and maintained by the community have been taken over by the Egyptian army while hospitals of other religious communities have not been touched. Jewish patients were evacuated from their hospital beds. With the requisition of the Jewish hospitals, Jewish surgeons have no access to hospital facilities. Moreover, the Medical Association of Egypt has directed the Egyptian populace to refrain from consulting Jewish physicians or surgeons for any cause.

Jews in other professions have suffered the same fate as the doctors. Jewish lawyers, nationals of Egypt, have been disbarred. Jewish engineers have been denied the right to practice. Since the Jewish laboring class was dependent for its employment upon the maintenance of Jewish enterprise, the forcible closing of Jewish business and the prohibition of Jewish professional life has resulted in the virtual exclusion from employment of the whole Egyptian Jewish community.

At the present time, with only a few exceptions, Jewish businesses are not permitted to operate in Egypt under their legal owners. Jewish employees have been dismissed from all sequestered firms including foreign corporations not owned by Jews. One informant of the American Jewish Congress related that of 40 Jews employed in the office of the Shell Oil Company in Cairo only four were permitted to return to their desks on the day following the appointment of a government administrator under Proclamation No. 4.

No property is too small for sequestration and government functionaries have not hesitated to exploit the situation for private gain. Reporting the experiences of persons he had interviewed, Barrett McGurn wrote from Naples on January 7 in the New York *Herald Tribune*:

One said that he had lost a \$55,000 printing plant. Another, born fifty-eight years ago in Alexandria, but never an Egyptian citizen, said that he had lost a \$25,000 farm property.

Many said that army officers and police were taking apartments which fleeing Jews were leaving. Egyptians are offering to buy the property of fleeing Jews but sometimes at merely one per cent of value, it was reported. One boy said that his father had been offered \$125 in payment for the family's \$15,000 house.

Most aboard were members of the lower middle class, many of them small shopkeepers, but some, according to their fellows, left as much as "\$125,000 to \$600,000 in apartment houses, land and large commercial firms."

In its determination to squeeze every bit of profit from its expellees, the government has even stripped them of modest private possessions. Persons searched at Egyptian airports have had to surrender even such items of personal jewelry as wrist-watches, tie pins and brooches. This relentless pressure has succeeded in forcing the Jewish community to try to sell its property for trifling sums:

Those ordered to leave—or who, under pressure, decide to go—can take out 100 pounds (or \$280). Business and property and valuables like jewels, furniture, fur coats, are padlocked by a public custodian for "future disposition."

Naturally, deportees don't expect to hear again from the custodian. They make every effort at salvage. I was approached on a Cairo street and offered a vast amount of currency and jewelry for my word that I would have a bank pay the deportee a trifling amount of dollars in Paris. I rejected the deal, but there is profitable traffic with these unfortunates; many participating are in government service.

When police have the power to deal with "enemy aliens" they are seldom gentle, often corrupt. (*World Telegram*, December 28, 1956.)

American newspapers continue to report that the Egyptian government is "hamstrung" for cash. (The *New York Times*, January 2, 1957.) A. J. Liebling in the *New Yorker* of January 12, 1957, noted that the economists in Egypt believe that the sequestration of British and French enterprises has yielded few tangible assets to the Egyptian government and that for the most part these have been offset by the counter blockage of Egyptian funds in Great Britain and France. Most of the French and British firms were principally service organizations, he wrote, and "all the Egyptians got with most of these properties was a heap of office furniture and their own money back."

These profitless seizures of British and French assets may account in part for the avidity and haste with which Jewish property has been despoiled. Egyptian Jews can take no counter measures and Egypt, by looting its own nationals and stateless persons, places itself beyond the reach of international action. Whatever they wrench from the Jewish community, they take in absolute immunity. In the words of an Egyptian Jew, identified by the Associated Press as a former Egyptian industrialist who escaped to Naples:

We are probably Egypt's most profitable export of the year. We are taking out of the country, all of us together, a few thousand pounds. We are leaving in Egypt tens and tens and tens of thousands of pounds in cash, jewelry, profitable businesses, and industries. (*New York Post*, January 7, 1957.)

III. NASSERISM AND HITLERISM

THE PARALLELS between Hitler's campaign against the Jews of Germany and Nasser's attack upon the Jews of Egypt are too close to be coincidental. The anti-Jewish techniques developed in Germany are now being applied in Egypt with increasing rigor. Nasser's "Egyptianization" and Hitler's "Aryanization" programs have the same xenophobic intent and both concentrate on the Jews as their primary target.

It has already been noted that on November 20, 1956, Nasser in effect opened the door for denationalization of Egyptian Jews. Similarly, on July 26, 1933, the German Minister of Interior handed down a decree providing for the denationalization of a large percentage of German Jewish citizens. Jewish lawyers in Egypt have been disbarred, and Jewish physicians, dentists, pharmacists, architects, and other professionals have been dropped from the rolls of their professional societies and have been prevented in other ways from practicing. This duplicates a German statute of July 25, 1938, which declared that "Jews are not to be licensed as physicians" and a subsequent decree declaring that "Jews are excluded from the practice of law."

Perhaps the closest parallels between the two regimes is to be found in the programs of economic expropriation. In November 1938, Hermann Goering decreed that "Jews . . . are excluded from the operation of individual retail businesses, exporting firms and sales agencies" and, further, that from that date on "no Jew can manage a firm. . . ." These edicts have been paralleled by a number of Egyptian ones.

By 1938, some 120,000 German Jews were driven to migrate to other countries. Just as the Egyptian escapees are permitted to take with them a maximum of twenty Egyptian pounds (a hundred pounds according to some reports), so Jewish emigrants from Germany were divested of their possessions and permitted to carry out a maximum of ten German marks. On all capital transferred abroad the German treasury levied a "flight tax" of 25% and allowed the remaining 75% to be transferred in "blocked marks" whose value was only 1/6 of the free mark. Nasser has gone even further: he has compelled Egyptian Jews to flee abroad in an even more destitute condition than their German predecessors.

Nasser's aim, like Hitler's aim, is first the pauperization and then the expulsion of the Jewish community. In both countries, Jewish enterprises and properties were seized to bolster an economy weakened by ruinous military expenditures. Goering, in a memorandum in 1938, cryptically noted: "Very critical situation of the Reich Exchequer. Relief through the billion [marks] imposed on Jewry, and through profits accruing to the Reich in the Aryanization of Jewish enterprises." Nasser's grandiose aims have also entailed financial outlays beyond the capacity of Egypt's economy and the expropriation of Jewish properties is a patent source of relief.

It is significant that the notorious Johann von Leers, formerly a top official of the Nazi Propaganda Ministry, occupies an important place in the Ministry of National Guidance. With such men as von Leers occupying influential posts in Nasser's government, it is not surprising that Egyptian officers and men in Sinai were found to have carried copies of an Arabic translation of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in their knapsacks, and that an important Damascus newspaper, *Al Manar*, should have been moved to write:

One should not forget that, in contrast to Europe, Hitler occupied an honored place in the Arab world. His name awakened in Arab hearts feelings of love and enthusiasm. The Arab world should be congratulated on producing in

its midst this Hitler who has shaken the world from end to end. . . . [Journalists] are mistaken if they think that by calling Nasser Hitler they are hurting us. On the contrary, his name makes us proud. Long live Hitler, the Nazi who struck at the heart of our enemies! Long live the Hitler of the Arab world . . .! (Quoted in the Paris *Le Monde*, August 17, 1956.)

IV. THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

THE PREAMBLE of the Charter of the United Nations recites that

We, the peoples of the United Nations, determined . . . to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal right of men and women . . . do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations.

The very first article of the Charter repeats this high resolve, declaring that among the stated "purposes of the United Nations" are "promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion. . . ." Finally the member states of the UN "pledge" themselves by Articles 55 and 56 of the Charter to take joint and separate actions in cooperation with the UN to achieve "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion."

These declarations and pledges are gradually being made effective. Since its first meeting, the UN has attempted to translate the majestic generalities of the Charter into precise undertakings and ultimately to establish an international code of human rights having the effect of law. On December 10, 1948, the General Assembly without a single dissenting vote (Soviet Russia, Saudi Arabia and six other countries abstaining) adopted the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." Among the provisions of this Declaration, intended as a "common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations," are two that are directly relevant to this study.

Article 9 of the Declaration provides: "No one shall be subject to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile."

Article 15 provides: "Everyone has the right to nationality. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality."

It is clear from the legislative history of these two provisions that the term "arbitrary" means more than "illegal" but rather any act "taken at the will and pleasure of some person who could not be called upon to show just cause for it."

The members of the United Nations have likewise been concerned with the protection of civilians during the time of war or armed conflict. At Geneva, in 1949, four Conventions were signed and later ratified by most of the members of the United Nations, including Egypt and the United States. The Fourth Geneva Convention attempts to protect "the whole of the populations of the countries in conflict, without any adverse distinction based, in particular, on race, nationality, religion or political opinion . . ." (Article 13). Article 27 of the Convention in defining the rights of "protected persons" declares that they "are entitled, in all circumstances, to respect for their persons, their honor, their family rights, their religious convictions and practices, and their manners and customs." While internment is specifically allowed, it may be ordered "only if the security of the Detaining Power makes it absolutely necessary" (Article 42). Article 33 forbids punishment for an offense which a protected person has not "personally committed" and likewise forbids "reprisals against protected persons and their property."

While Jews in Egypt of Egyptian nationality are not protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention, Jews of British or French nationality and stateless Jews are (Articles 4 and 13).

The acts of reprisal taken against Egyptian Jewry not possessing Egyptian nationality—confiscation of property,

internment, denationalization and deportation—are all in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The United Nations has, however, failed to take any public action with respect to Egyptian Jewry. It did not request the Secretary General to investigate the grave reports that had caused so much “concern.” It set up no committee of inquiry. The General Assembly addressed no inquiries to Egypt. A desultory discussion was held in December, 1956, and then the matter died. At no time was a resolution on Egyptian Jewry presented to the Assembly.

In other similar cases, the UN had not been silent. Despite the opposition of the Soviet bloc, the United Nations has adopted no less than ten different resolutions relating to the oppression of the gallant Hungarian revolutionaries. These resolutions asked for food and medicine for the Hungarian refugees, called for an end to deportations, requested permission for UN observers to examine the situation in Hungary, and designated a committee to hear the testimony of Hungarian refugees.

The contrast is almost unbelievable. The nations whose hearts were justly open for Hungarian refugees could not find the time even to talk about the persecution of Egyptian Jewry.

V. THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES

THE UNITED STATES has expressed its concern to the Government of Egypt over the pressures exerted on British and French nationals and on the Jewish community in Egypt. On December 21, 1956, Ambassador James J. Wadsworth, the Alternate United States Representative at the United Nations, stated to the plenary session of the General Assembly:

The United States has received information concerning the treatment of certain nationals and stateless persons in Egypt which occasions concern. It has not yet been possible to evaluate this information fully. Nor has it been possible to obtain a clarification of some aspects of the situation which are still obscure.

The information which is presently available to my government indicates that an indeterminate number of persons, including British and French nationals and persons of Jewish origin, in Egypt, have been subjected to pressure and intimidation and, in some cases, have been ordered deported. While we recognize the right of any government to take measures which are necessary in the interests of its security, the United States must express its concern at any unwarranted pressures exerted against minorities.

The United States Ambassador in Cairo has been requested to bring to the attention of the Government of Egypt the concern of the American people over these reports.

The United States hopes that everything possible will be done to ensure that measures will not be employed which will discriminate unjustly against human beings merely on racial or religious grounds or on the basis of foreign nationality.

Mr. Wadsworth's statement was significant since it made clear that whatever confusion existed at the time about the exact state of affairs in Egypt, there was at least suffi-

cient evidence to warrant the U. S. Ambassador's intervention in Cairo. It raised the reasonable expectation that the U. S. government would pursue an investigation that would substantiate or refute the charges. With the resources at their command, with the abundant data available for its study, appropriate United States agencies, it was felt, would readily ascertain the truth and assume leadership in the United Nations in the effort to cause the Egyptian Government to desist in its campaign of violence and violations of basic human freedoms.

Unfortunately, Mr. Wadsworth undermined the effect of his expression of our Government's "concern" by following immediately with this statement:

I make bold to conclude with a plea. I suggest that the matter we are now discussing is not one which is likely to benefit from prolonged discussion here; certainly it will not benefit from any intemperate discussion. That is why, without in any way wishing to cut off speakers whose names have been inscribed on the list of speakers and who will follow me to the rostrum, I would suggest to them, as well as to other representatives who may desire to speak on this subject, that the most useful thing we could do would be to bring this phase of the discussion to an early end.

Since Mr. Wadsworth's declaration at the UN General Assembly, the United States has not appeared to advance either in determining the facts or in rallying world opinion to the necessity of opposing firmly and immediately Egypt's contravention of fundamental human rights and liberties. In early January, in response to an appeal by the American Jewish Congress and other organizations for vigorous action to save those who are being persecuted in Egypt, the State Department, in a form letter, stated that it was still trying to obtain an accurate picture of the situation in Egypt in the light of the many "conflicting assurances" now being made and that the problem is being kept under "active surveillance."

These sentiments, which in ordinary circumstances might have provided some comfort, can hardly allay

anxiety at a time when the Egyptian government is moving with rapidity and thoroughness to destroy the lives and liberties of the Jewish community. What is perhaps the most disappointing aspect of the State Department's response is its assertion that it is still not in full possession of the facts. The reports of Egyptian excesses have appeared in the press of virtually every non-Arabic country. In addition, there are at least 8,000 expellees from Egypt (as of January 23) who can testify from their own experience to the cruel treatment of the Jewish community of Egypt.

The conscience of the American people has been outraged by Egypt's persecution of an innocent and powerless minority and by its flagrant assault on those principles of freedom and human dignity all free nations cherish. Civic groups, church bodies, and labor and professional associations have urged the United States to take more effective diplomatic action than it has thus far.

Thus on December 16, 1956, 34 leading Christian clergymen in the United States addressed a moving appeal to President Eisenhower to seek action by the United Nations to end the persecution of Jews in Egypt. These clergymen included many of our most respected religious spokesmen, a good number of whom have been actively concerned for years in Middle Eastern problems, including the problem of providing for and resettling the Arab refugees. Their appeal stated in part:

While we are gratified that the United States Government is expressing its "deep concern" to the Government of Egypt, we feel impelled to express to you our deep concern over the campaign of violence entered upon by the Government of Egypt against citizens, stateless persons and nationals of other lands.

In the present Egyptian program directed against the human rights, security, freedom and economic welfare of Egyptian Jews and Jews in Egypt, a pattern has emerged that is clearly imitative of the Hitler pattern and of the present Communist pattern in Hungary. . . .

In cancelling citizenship, in ordering deportation of citizens, or stateless persons and nationals of other lands, in

taking away property, in confiscating bank accounts, in the establishment of concentration camps, and in holding men and women as hostages, we find an awful and terrible imitation and refinement of the Hitler program and practices which ultimately plunged the world into war. . . .

The United States, indeed the world, paid an appalling price to rid humanity of these evils when finally it was forced to go to war against Hitlerism. Since then, mankind has been on guard against a renewed outbreak of this malady in many lands, even in our own nation. It is our persuasion that unless the United States opposes firmly and immediately the reappearance of racism in Egypt, in whatever guise, this pernicious evil will endanger the spiritual foundation of morality and freedom in all the world. (*New York Times*, December 17.)

The deep attachment of the United States to the concept of religious freedom has induced our government in the past to intercede in instances of religious persecution and even where such intercessions entailed direct criticism of the internal legislation of other states. In 1840, in the first representation relating to Jews made by the United States to any foreign state, Secretary of State John Forsyth, at the direction of President Van Buren, instructed the American Consul at Alexandria, Egypt, to intervene in behalf of Damascus Jews who had been falsely accused of murder.

Since that time the diplomatic record is studded with instances of altruistic intervention by American officials on behalf of persecuted Jewish populations abroad. The United States, for example, protested on behalf of the Jews in Morocco in 1863, to Persia in 1897, to Russia in 1908, to Syria and Palestine in 1915, to Italy in 1938, and to Argentina in 1943. In the Nazi era, the U. S. Government utilized available diplomatic channels to protest the atrocities of Hitler's regime.

In 1878, Secretary of State William Evarts interceded in Morocco, despite an awareness that his action might be construed as improper. In accord with America's finest ideal of compassion for the victims of suffering and oppression, he wrote the American Consul in Morocco: "Still,

there might be cases in which humanity would dictate a disregard of technicalities, if your influence would shield Hebrews from oppression." It is in this traditional spirit of humanity and understanding that we ought to approach the agony the Jewish community is undergoing in Egypt today.

VI. CONCLUSION

ONCE AGAIN a Jewish community has been doomed to destruction by a brutal dictatorship.

For many weeks Jewish leaders had been assured by their governments and by the spokesmen of international organizations that the Egyptian dictatorship had undertaken only a limited action against a handful of Jews as a precautionary measure justified by emergency war conditions. These statements were made and widely disseminated on the basis of replies to inquiries addressed to the Egyptian government and its leading members. Today it is all too clear that behind this propaganda of calculated deception the Egyptian government was engaged in the task of uprooting the Jewish community and making its further existence impossible.

A substantial number of Jews whose families had resided in Egypt for generations were denationalized; many Jews of all nationalities were served with orders of expulsion; thousands were subjected to intimidation and pressure with the object of compelling them to apply for permission to depart. In order to ensure that this deliberate creation of a new refugee problem should not evoke protests from international public opinion, those who had expulsion orders were deprived of them before departure and they, as well as all who left, were compelled to sign statements certifying that they were going voluntarily. The victims of this lawless and vicious process were deprived of their possessions and were allowed to take with them only trivial sums and personal effects needed on the journey. Hundreds of those who have reached lands of refuge have testified that they were taken

from prison or concentration camps, often in shackles, to the ships, and subjected to indignities on the way.

Over 8,000 of such refugees, out of a total Jewish population of approximately 50,000, have now reached lands of freedom. This steady stream threatens to become a flood unless in the meantime international authorities exert themselves in an effort to halt it.

An element of major importance in the scheme of persecution elaborated by the Egyptian authorities has been the sequestration of Jewish properties. Orders were promulgated authorizing the appropriate military authority to sequester the property not only of enemy aliens but of any other persons whom this authority at its unfettered discretion might designate. As a result, hundreds of properties and enterprises, belonging in whole or in part to Jews, and among them some of the most important in the country, have been taken over by the government. No distinction has been made on grounds of nationality. Among the victims are Egyptian citizens, stateless persons, foreigners of various nationalities other than and in addition to British and French nationals. Every Jewish enterprise of any significance has, in fact, been sequestered under those orders.

Closely associated with this process of sequestration has been the deliberate impoverishment of the great mass of Egyptian Jewry by depriving it of the means of livelihood. Jews have been dismissed or suspended without compensation from posts in all public enterprises and services. The same fate has overtaken Jewish employees in the sequestered enterprises and businesses. Non-Jewish employers have been forced, often against their will, to dismiss Jewish employees. Jewish professionals have through various devices been deprived of the right to practice. The result has been that a once prosperous community has been reduced in a few weeks to the status of paupers.

Jewish communities everywhere have been profoundly shaken by the apparent helplessness of the UN in the presence of this great human tragedy. Not a single au-

thoritative voice has been raised on behalf of the Egyptian Jews by the international community in public protest. There have been sincere efforts made privately by international diplomacy and democratic governments to urge counsels of moderation on the Egyptian regime, but they have apparently failed.

The Egyptian government has worked out its anti-Jewish designs with the aid of notorious Nazis and with the aid of techniques elaborated by the Hitler regime. It has pursued these designs in flagrant contravention of international agreements which it has helped to draft and which it has ratified. Adapting the Nazi methods to the Egyptian scene, the Nasser regime has enacted special legislation to give the color of legalism to its inhumanities; it has taken hostages from Jewish families in order to silence the victims who have escaped.

The process of spoliation and persecution was undertaken not during the conflict with Israel but after the UN intervened to save the Nasser regime from destruction. The cease-fire became effective on November 6 but the sequestration order is dated November 8. The new nationality law, which stripped many Jews of Egyptian nationality on the flimsiest pretexts, dates from November 20.

The implications of Egypt's campaign to end the existence of the Jewish community should be seriously pondered by the free peoples of the world. It should be recalled that the Nazi regime struck out first at the Jews and then proceeded against other groups. Similarly, the assault by the Nasser regime on the Jews, its most defenseless minority, inaugurates a process which can extend to every group which bars the way to the grandiose Pan-Arabic design under Egyptian leadership, articulated in Nasser's book *The Philosophy of the Revolution*.

For the leaders of the free world to ignore these portents, is to do so at the peril of world peace. In these circumstances, apart from the dictates of humanity and compassion, apart from preserving the cherished ideals of freedom and liberty, it is a matter of enlightened self-

interest for the international community and all democratic governments to intervene energetically to halt the destruction of the Egyptian Jewish community.

This solemn obligation is one which the United States Government should in particular assume. The United States Government was a bulwark of support for the Nasser regime in the recent crisis. It has become a beacon of hope for all groups throughout the world who chafe under tyranny and oppression. Its prestige would be tarnished by failure to act in a situation which so palpably calls for the U. S. Government's immediate action.

There are three courses which the United States Government can pursue and which all men who abhor violence, cruelty and oppression will enthusiastically endorse.

First, the President of the United States should remind the Government of Egypt directly of its obligation as a member of the United Nations and of the civilized community to abandon its present course of inhuman oppression of its Jewish population, to cease and desist from its acts of arrest, economic strangulation, persecution and deportation.

Second, the United States delegation to the United Nations should take the lead in the General Assembly in calling for action consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and with the several international compacts to which Egypt is a signatory that expressly guarantee respect for fundamental human rights.

Third, the Government of the United States should extend this country's tradition of sanctuary and haven to the Egyptian refugees. It should use the existing authority exercised by the Attorney General under the immigration laws on behalf of Hungarian refugees in a similar fashion on behalf of those Jews and stateless persons in Egypt who have been deported or compelled to leave.

ISRAEL GOLDSTEIN

President, American Jewish Congress

WILL MASLOW,
General Counsel

PHIL BAUM,
Of Counsel

January, 1957

APPENDIX

ARRIVALS OF REFUGEE JEWS FROM EGYPT

NOVEMBER 22, 1956—JANUARY 23, 1957

Ports, dates of disembarkation and number of refugees

<i>Name of Vessel</i>	<i>Piraeus</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Naples</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Marseilles</i>	<i>No.</i>
Askania			11/22/56	4		
Achilaus			11/30	250		
Marseillaise					11/30/56	250
Al Sudan			12/4	21		
Esperia			12/5	80		
Korinthia			12/7	145	12/9	60
Sultan			12/8	18		
Enostica			12/12	80		
Achilaus			12/14	350		
Aolia			12/14	240	12/16	180
Misr			12/14	103		
Jugoslavia					12/18	140
Esperia			12/18	50		
Nefrettiti			12/19	40		
Achilaus			12/21	150	12/23	230
Lydia					12/22	150
Al Sudan			12/21	380		
Argentina			12/22	20		
Pasteur					12/25	100
Korinthia			12/27	73		
by eight different vessels till 12/27/56		250				
Jugoslavia			12/29	20	12/31	200
Achilaus	12/31/56	20	1/1/57	45	1/2/57	385
Esperia			1/1	130		
Nefrettiti			1/1	45		
Aolia	12/31	20	1/2	20	1/4	250
Misr			1/6	967		
Jugoslavia					1/7	200
Carinthia	1/18/57	72	1/19	30	1/21	180
Jugoslavia					1/20	130
Aolia					1/21	100
Misr	1/23	857				

Totals

Greece

1,219

Italy

3,261

France

2,555

7,035

Estimated arrivals during
same period by plane in
Italy, Switzerland, France
and Great Britain.

1,400

8,435

AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS

ISRAEL GOLDSTEIN	<i>President</i>	<i>Vice Presidents:</i>	
JUSTINE WISE POLIER	<i>Chairman</i>	MORTON M. BERMAN	<i>Chicago</i>
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